

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Basin Board Land Resources Committee Southwest Florida Water Management District

Green Swamp West Meeting Facility

July 13, 2009

The Basin Board Land Resources Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met at the Green Swamp West Meeting Facility in Dade City. The following persons were present:

Board Members

Albert Joerger, Chair
Bo Rooks, Vice Chair
Hugh Gramling, Governing Board Member
Ken Harrison, Committee Member
Devon Higginbotham, Alternate Committee Member
Chet Renfro, Alternate Committee Member

Staff Members

Eric Sutton
Joel DeAngelis
Stephanie Green
Cheryl Hill
Lou Kavouras
Chuck Lane
Kevin Love
Will Miller
Amy Poxson
Gina Sowders

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Joerger called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.
2. **March 16, 2009 Meeting Minutes** – Following consideration, Mr. Harrison moved, seconded by Mr. Rooks to approve the March 16, 2009 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
3. **Report on Multiple Use Management** – Ms. Green stated that this review is the first step towards answering the question of whether the District is maximizing the potential for revenue generating uses on District lands under current limitations and constraints. Currently the District, through its multiple-use management strategy, generates money from several activities including silvicultural activities, cattle grazing leases and apiary leases.

Staff developed a list of ways to generate revenue on District-owned lands that consisted of uses that are currently available on District lands, historic and anticipated requests, new land-based energy initiatives and staff's knowledge of recreational opportunities on other public lands. The list totaled 25 items which were then grouped into three broad categories: implementation of recreational fee system; currently available use; and new use.

Staff then developed a filter-based on the Dichotomous Key which represents a logical, step-wise approach to reaching a conclusion regarding the uses. There are only two outcomes possible with this filter and that is non-compatible or suggests additional review. After processing each idea through the filter, a list of nine suggests additional review, five of which are currently available. The remaining four include biomass harvesting, carbon credits, eco-tours/concessions, and communication tower leases. The idea of a recreation fee system was not put through the filter as it pertains to uses that already exist on District lands for which there is not a fee. Fees are utilized on a many of Florida's public lands and are proportionate to the amenities on site.

Staff has concluded that the next step should include a more detailed, fine filter that should include, but not be limited to the following: detailed impacts to natural resources; compatibility with the land use and management plans and other specific issues; cost-to-benefit ratios; demand, regional availability; liability and user safety; security concerns; and infrastructure needs.

The second recommended action is to conduct a review of current policies, procedures, and plans that pertain to multiple-use on District lands. The completion of the Florida Natural Areas Inventory vegetation mapping would be the third recommended action as this would be key in determining an updated land base evaluation that would determine if and where there can be expansion of some of the District's current uses. The final step recommended would be that research be continued in regard to the four potential uses, as well as an investigation into the idea of implementing a fee system on District lands.

Mr. Joerger recommended that staff take a closer look at the fine filter and return to a later meeting with an update. Mr. Harrison suggested looking at cost saving, not just revenue generating. Mr. Rooks also asked that comments from private partners be incorporated.

3. **Review of Land Use Stakeholders Meeting** – Mr. Lane stated that on June 4, 2009, staff held a Land Use Stakeholders meeting that included cooperators, parties that have interests in environmental concerns and parties that are interested in recreation. The goal of the meeting was to listen to stakeholders' thoughts, experiences and perspectives through a discussion to help the District continuously improve strategies to manage resources without compromising the ecological services for which they were acquired. Some of the expected outcomes consisted of gaining an understanding of public interest for recreation, developing a network of cooperators, peers and valued user groups, and to develop a better understanding and appreciation for the landholdings.

Conceptual ideas in response to the stakeholders' discussion include influencing the next generation; the windshield experience; supporting the land use and management plans; and influencing policy-makers. Influencing the next generation would include promoting what is already in place; continuing awareness efforts; continuing to support environmental education centers and programs; and continuing to promote agreements with youth groups such as the Boy Scouts of America. Vehicle access, mainly a lack of windshield experience, may contribute to the perception that District lands are locked up. Suggestions were promoting what is already in place; adding signage along public roads; designation of SR 471; and partnering tram rides. In supporting the land use and management plans, requesting stakeholders attendance at public meetings and utilizing group members in the management review process were suggested. Influencing policy-makers by getting them outside and continuing to engage stakeholders was also suggested.

A great amount of positive feedback was received regarding the meeting.

4. **Florida Forever and Water Management Lands Trust Fund Funding Status** – Mr. Sutton stated that the Legislature did not fund the debt service required to issue Florida Forever bonds for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Additionally, the District did not receive an allocation within the Water Management Lands Trust Fund, which funds preacquisition costs and our land management program. The District has funds in its portion of Florida Forever and Water Management Lands Trust Funds from past years' allocations which will be used to fund preacquisition costs and the land management program for FY2009-2010. It is hopeful that the Florida Forever Trust Fund will receive an appropriation during the upcoming

legislative session. However, there is less confidence that the District will receive an appropriation within Water Management Lands Trust Fund. If that is the case, staff will be pursuing other means of funding, including ad valorem appropriations.

5. **Fiscal Year 2010 Meeting Dates** – The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at the Green Swamp West Meeting Facility in Dade City, with a tour following the meeting. The remaining meetings for the fiscal year are scheduled for March 16, 2010 at the Starkey Environmental Education Center in New Port Richey, and on July 14, 2010 at the Green Swamp West Meeting Facility in Dade City. The July 14, 2010 meeting may possibly be a joint meeting with the Basin Board Education Committee.
6. **December Committee Meeting Agenda** – Items mentioned for discussion were follow-ups to the Stakeholders meeting and the multiple-use management report. Also the Committee would like an update on land acquisition.
7. **Adjournment** - There being no further business or announcements to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.